

## INFORMATION REPORT

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25X1

25X1

25X1

1. Planning for the professional and political training by the Bereitschaft staff and the training departments of the schools.

Planning in the Volkspolizei installations (VPD) followed the lines of the training program issued by the HVA training staff. In many installations planning did not adhere to the guiding principles of the HVA and its execution was superficial, careless, and incomplete. Particular shortcomings became apparent in the following:

- (a) in the utilization of equipment: for example, VPD 1642 did not make full use of its equipment during mortar training because no equipment utilization plan had been drawn up;
- (b) in the planning of training demonstrations;
- (c) in the battalion and company plans: these plans did not indicate the training subjects, the designation of objectives, and the place of execution. Such, for example, was the case with VPD 2425 and VPD 1034. In addition, some of the plans were not confirmed by the acting commanders.

2. Difficulties encountered in the planning were due to:

- (a) shortages of equipment in the VPD units;
- (b) lack of adequate training areas and the distant location of some training areas;
- (c) insufficiency of available classrooms, messhalls, etc.;
- (d) failure of the printing shop to deliver the forms necessary for drawing up the plans, so that only a sample of the form was available to each unit.

25X1

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-2-

3. General conclusions concerning planning.

During the period of the report, planning was, to a large extent, still not carried out satisfactorily according to the guiding principles laid down during the month of March. In order to improve the planning phase, the units will be requested during April to furnish reports about their experience with the directions laid down by headquarters and to furnish proposals for improvements.

IV. Index of Professional and Political Training  
Within the HVA and VPD

1. Schooling of staff members of the HVA was carried on in five training groups at the rate of eight hours per week:

First Group

Includes: Chefinspekteure, Inspekteure and Kommandeure  
Goal : Regimental Commanders (Bereitschaftsleiter)

Second Group

Includes: Oberraete, Raete and authorized Oberkommissare  
Goal : Battalion Commanders (Kommandoleiter)

Third Group

Includes: Oberkommissare, Kommissare, Unterkommissare and authorized Meister.  
Goal : Company Commanders (Abteilungsleiter)

Fourth Group

Includes: Corporals and enlisted men.  
Goal : Platoon leaders (Zugführer)

Fifth Group

Includes: Female members  
Goal : Squad leaders (Gruppenführer)

Emphasis was placed on general tactics training which was carried out by means of lectures, seminars, and sandtable exercises. The training requirements of the first phase were met by all groups. Weak spots still exist in the ability to make decisions, in the organization of the work of the Kommandeur after he receives his mission, in the comprehension of the Kommandeur's briefing, and the arrangement of the contents of the combat order.

2. Training status of the VPD Staffs.

- (a) The staffs have not worked together long enough to form cohesive, integrated bodies. There is a lack of planned direction by the leaders of the Bereitschaften, lack of concrete division of labor and precise delineation of personal responsibility. The political staff officer does not, in all cases, coordinate his work with the operational and supply sections of the units. This lack of collective cooperation is especially noticeable in VPD's 1642, 1844, 1556, 2155, 1293, and 1213. Poor cooperation existed in VPD 3172 between the Berichtschaft leader and the PK deputy. In VPD 1321, in spite of a well-qualified staff, there exist weaknesses in the collective staff work because of unsound working methods laid down by the Commander.
- (b) Supervision and control are not being centrally directed by the staffs of the VPD units and are not organized toward a definite target. Staff officers fail to provide effective planned leadership.
- (c) The staffs and the individual assistants to the chief of staff have not yet received specialized professional training. The personal professional training status of the officers varies. The staff officers have until now participated in the general officers' training. Specialized training will be provided only during the second training phase.

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-3-

- (d) Good collective collaboration exists in VPD's 1239 and 2735. A good inspection system is found in VPD 2735. Oberrat Röhr, the deputy for training of VPD 1321, is an excellent organizer and planner of specialized training. Good work is also being performed by the deputy for technical equipment of VPD 2425 in procuring instruction material.

3. The Training of Kommandeure.

- (a) Officer training in the VPD is accomplished in three groups:

- (1) Platoon leaders or their equivalent;
- (2) Abteilungsleiter or their equivalent;
- (3) Kommandoleiter or their equivalent.

In addition, the HVA conducts a three-day course each month for unit commanders (leader, deputy, and chief of staff).

- (b) Emphasis in the officer training was placed on general tactical training. Special training was conducted only in a minority of cases. The material taught was generally mastered satisfactorily from a theoretical standpoint. A majority of the officers, however, still do not know how to put their theoretical knowledge into practice.
- (c) Training through lectures and demonstrations was only partially successful because of the lack of equipment and insufficient preparation and organization.
- (d) The classes, especially those of platoon leaders, are too large. During the last phase, some were composed of 30 to 50 officers. Training suffered generally from too much theory and not enough practice in sandtable and terrain exercises. Almost all officers exhibited shortcomings in estimating a situation, making decisions, and giving orders. The young officers are especially deficient in practical skills. They do not recognize mistakes or know how to eliminate them. In almost all units the athletic training of the officers is unsatisfactory. In addition, the following deficiencies have appeared in the training of officers of the various branches:

Category B:

- (a) Practice with heavy equipment is being conducted largely inside the shelters; training can therefore be only imperfect and unrealistic.
- (b) The scale on aiming instruments (6100) is not identical with that of the guns (6000).

CATEGORY C:

A part of the young officers of Group III, in spite of guidance by their superiors, did not demonstrate the will to learn.

Category D 1:

Symptoms similar to those in Category C. Notebooks are being poorly kept.

4. Training of Non-Commissioned Officers.

In most units training of non-commissioned officers took place five hours weekly in preparation for the duties of the coming training week. Non-coms generally show the same shortcomings as the young officers. They lack the ability to initiate the students in practical work, to recognize and to eliminate faults. Fourteen-day courses for non-commissioned officers with approximately 30 percent of the NCO's participating are to be conducted in all units. At the end of each course these NCO's are to take part in training demonstrations in tactics, firing, terrain appreciation (Grundausbildung), and sports.

-4-

5. Training of Students at the Volkspolizei Schools.

- (a) The program was fully carried out during the period of the report. The following shortcomings were noted in the various subjects:

Category A

- Tactics: Exploitation of the terrain. Creeping and crawling technique; digging in, etc.
- Firing: Weapons knowledge, especially light machine gun.
- Basic Training: Lack of uniformity in training; slovenly drill exercises; failure to recognize errors.
- Athletics: Approach to and retreat from the gymnastic apparatus; slovenly execution of exercises; imperfect body control.
- Map Reading: Practical application of theoretical knowledge, terrain orientation; terrain description.

Category B

- Tactics: Same as Category A
- Firing: Interior and exterior ballistics; imperfect knowledge of the pistol.
- Basic Training: Same as Category A.
- Map Reading: Same as Category A. Estimation of heights by contour lines.
- Athletics: Same as Category A.
- Special Training: Practical handling of equipment and understanding of firing mechanism.

Category C

Weaknesses were found only in the athletic training and in the practical handling of equipment.

Category D 1 and D 2

Generally the same difficulties as in Category A.

Specialized Training D 1: Practical application of theoretical knowledge.

- (b) During the period of the report all training branches conducted only individual training.
- (c) In tactical, basic, and special training, one-third of the training time was devoted to teaching methods and individual maintenance.
- (d) The majority of the students were able to absorb the material presented to them. They showed particular interest in the practical and terrain training as well as in the specialized training. A part of the class has not yet recognized the value of basic training and athletics.
- (e) During the training the following difficulties became apparent:
- (1) lack of qualified instructors in the subjects of tactics, firing, and athletics;
  - (2) long marching distance to the training fields (small gasoline allotment);
  - (3) insufficient instruction and illustrative material, especially in firing and map reading;

## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25X1

-5-

- (4) lack of basic training manual;
- (5) small quantity of equipment, particularly for specialized training, aiming and sports.

## (f) Conclusions and recommendations:

- (1) The weaknesses displayed by individuals in the various training subjects are to be remedied during April in the course of group training.
- (2) Training emphasis is to be laid on the practical phase and on terrain exercises during which individual trainees are to act in each exercise as supervisors as well as instructors.
- (3) During this training, the subjects of the various branches are to be combined. For example, tactical terrain training in conjunction with map reading and engineer training.

6. Training in the Bereitschaft.

- (a) The program of the first training phase was in general carried to completion, except for VPD's 1321 and 1556 whose 3rd or 2nd special companies were continuously committed to guard duty during this period. Deficiencies still exist in the following subjects:

Tactics: The practical terrain training is still unsatisfactory. Behavior of the individual riflemen in the defense, attack, and close combat is not always satisfactory.

Firing: Judging of distances, target recognition, practical understanding of weapons and firing principles are poorly understood.

Basic Training: Chief difficulties lay in the lack of unity of the training.

Map Reading: Location of own position, use of coordinate scale and compass, orientation in the terrain.

Athletics: Approaching and stepping aside from the gymnastic apparatus. Undisciplined execution of the exercises.

Specialized Training: The mastery of general tactics was faulty in spots. The theoretical knowledge of special weapons was satisfactory to good but difficulties arose in the practical handling of the equipment. Particularly bad performance was observed in:

Tactics: VPD 2915, 2311, 2155, 1213, 1293, 1844, 1239, 1912 and 1321.

Firing: VPD 1844, 1213, 1642

Athletics: VPD 3242, 1916, 2311, 1321, 1293, 2247, 3172.

Map Reading: VPD 2915, 3242, 1912.

Good performances were achieved by VPD 2155 (special training), VPD 2311 (in political indoctrination and firing), VPD 1321 (in map reading and special training), VPD 3242 (1st Kommando in all branches except athletics), 1293 (special training) 1239 (the mortar Abteilung of the 1st Kommando in the specialized training), VPD 1152 (map reading), 1772 (in firing), 1912 (in tactics).

The entire training consisted of individual instruction. Unit exercises were not held. Training in all units was retarded because of the inability of young officers to act as instructors. The available training material is partly out of date and no longer in accordance with the new

SECRET

-5-

25X1

25X1

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## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25X1 [REDACTED]

-6-

training principles. Many units are short of housing space and training areas; in other cases the training area lies too far from the quarters. Difficulties also arose from insufficient supply of arms and materials.

7. Supervision and Inspection.

Ever since December 1950 the units have had instructions concerning the inspection system from the department of inspection and the department of training. Nevertheless, the leadership of the Bereitschafter has not yet fully appreciated the importance of the inspection system. The system of inspection is still not unified, the inspections are executed in a cursory manner, and orders are not given concretely nor do they indicate critical points. Results of inspections are exploited only superficially as well as insufficiently. The PK controls are not always coordinated with the special controls. Inspections by the HVA have pointed to these shortcomings again and again, and suggestions for improvements have been forwarded to the headquarters of the VPD units.

8. Guard and Interior Guard.

Guard and interior guard duties were being poorly performed at the beginning of the first training phase. Reasons were:

- (a) The importance of guard duty was not fully appreciated by most of the Volkspolizei men and officers.
- (b) Guard training was insufficient and there was little preparation prior to guard duty.
- (c) Supervision and inspection were very lax.

The chief defects in the performance of guard duty were:

- (a) The guards left their posts or slept at their posts.
- (b) The guards at the gates did not demand sufficient identification papers.
- (c) The officers of the guard did not carry out their duties conscientiously and gave bad examples to their men.

Through intensive instruction, increase of the guard duty preparations and more severe inspection and punishment, considerable improvement was achieved. Nevertheless, guard duty is still not performed satisfactorily in all units.

The performance of interior guard duty leaves much to be desired from the standpoint of punctuality, performance of morning calisthenics, cleanliness of quarters and messhalls, and care of uniforms, weapons, and materiel.

Instructive and illustrative training literature was drawn from the available HVA stocks. In addition, individual units used their own resources to procure instruction material for the improvement of their training. The training material available to the units in the past is partially out of date and inadequate. In particular the following material is needed:

Category A: Basic training manual, instructional booklets on tactical training with supplementary illustrative material. Visual aids for MG 42, MG 34, mortar, 7.65 pistol, practice hand grenades, instruction tables for firing practices, bobbing targets.

Categories B, C and D 2: Visual aids and models of all sorts for specialized training.

Category D 1: Illustrative tables and teaching apparatus.

The training fields placed at the disposal of the various units are, in general, too small for intensive terrain exercises (VPD 2311, 2915 and others).

SECRET [REDACTED]

25X1

-6-

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25X1

-7-

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Many of the fields are located far from the troop quarters (VPD 1912, 2311, 2664, etc.).

Other units do not have access to firing ranges for advanced combat practice firing. Target ranges for firing practice are available to all units.

Obstacle courses are being built by all VPD installations.

Part of the athletic equipment has been completed in the installations, part of it is still under construction.

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25X1

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-7-